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Comparison of primary education music lesson curriculums of Turkey and England in terms of acquisition targets

A.Aylin Can^{*a}, Tuba Yokuş^a, Hamit Yokuş^a^a Marmara University, İstanbul, Türkiye

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Abstract

It is expected that primary school education in music must contribute to individuals' psychological, moral, social, cultural developments; key skills and thinking abilities as well as gaining knowledge, ability, comprehension and approaches of music. So it is important to compare the primary education music lesson curriculums and different kind of approaches of different countries and cultures. By doing this, we can develop alternative perspectives. In this descriptive research, the acquisitions of performance skills, composition skills, evaluating skills and listening, the use of knowledge and perception in Turkey and England are grouped one by one and compared by the researchers of each field. As a result, it is indicated that in Turkey adequate importance is not given to composition and evaluation skills in primary school music education, so it is suggested that the curriculum should be reevaluated to include composition and evaluation skills.

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Keywords: Primary music education in Turkey and England; music lesson curriculum; acquisition targets; comparison; education in age groups 7-8.

1. Introduction

Primary music education is the basis of all musical education (Yönetken, 2001). Primary music teaching, that exists within the context of general music teaching, aims at acquisitions of basic and general musical knowledge, skills, perception and approaches (Uçan, 2001). In addition to this, it is supposed to contribute to the psychological, moral, social and cultural development; key skills (such as communication, problem solving etc.) and thinking skills of the individual (DFEE & QCA, 1999).

All of the doings and arrangements intended for the realization of the students' musical learning and change in their musical attitude are executed in accordance with the music education curriculum. Music teaching curriculum is the focal point of music education curriculum. Every music teaching curriculum has its own musical content, implied or explicit (Uçan, 2005, p. 63). If it is considered in terms of content, music education contains musical hearing, sound, instrument, musical movement and rhythm, knowledge of music, creativity, taste, musical identity, musical sensitivity, musical communication and interaction, education of musical usage and utilization (Uçan, 2005, p. 15). In Turkey, primary education music lesson curriculums, which are structured by the Ministry of National Education, have been restructured based on the music lesson curriculums of years 1964, 1984 and 1994 as of 2006-2007 academic year. The latest curriculum consists of parts as general aims, basic skills, areas of learning, acquisitions, activities, instructions, the process of teaching and learning and, measurement and evaluation. Acquisitions are the knowledge, skill, attitude and values expected from the students to have by means of planned and organized experiences within the teaching and learning process. Music lesson teaching curriculum is based on four basic fields of learning as listening-singing-performing, musical perception and learning, musical creativity and music culture (MEB, 2006).

In England, however, primary education music lesson curriculum was structured within the national standards, by Ministry of Education and Labour and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in 1999. The curriculum states what to teach to the students while the acquisition targets state the standards which are expected from the students' performances. The curriculum is approached with these musical aspects by means of which the students will make progress in knowledge, skills and comprehension: performance skills (control of the voices by means of singing and playing), composition skills (creating and

E-mail address: Aacan@anet.com.tr

improving musical ideas), evaluation skills (response and repetition), listening, use of knowledge and perception. It is aimed that teaching ensures listening, the use of knowledge and perception; and these acquisitions must be developed in connection with the composition and evaluation skills (DFEE & QCA, 1999; QCA, 2000a).

As it is stated above, there are various applications associated with the content of curriculums which are considered in terms of music teaching. Through the comparison of the phenomenons related to music education, one can have knowledge about the alternative approaches; thus, can learn how the problems in education are solved in different countries, by executing comparative education studies (King, 1979 as cited in Erdoğan, 2006).

The aim of this study is to contribute to the improvement of primary education music lesson curriculums of Turkey and England, theoretically and practically, by comparing these in terms of acquisition targets and by setting forth the differences and similarities between the teaching of performance skills, composition skills, evaluation skills, listening, the use of knowledge and perception involved in the curriculums; and to create a new set of data from the findings.

1.1. Research questions

The problem sentence of this study is “What are the similarities and differences between primary education music lesson curriculums in Turkey and in England in terms of acquisition targets?”

Throughout the study the problems have been focused on are:

What are the similarities and differences between primary education music lesson curriculums in Turkey and in England in terms of acquisitions of the performance skills?

What are the similarities and differences between primary education music lesson curriculums in Turkey and in England in terms of acquisitions of the composition skills?

What are the similarities and differences between primary education music lesson curriculums in Turkey and in England in terms of acquisitions of the evaluation skills?

What are the similarities and differences between primary education music lesson curriculums in Turkey and in England in terms of acquisitions of the listening, the use of knowledge and perception skills?

1.2. Limitations

This study is limited with:

age groups 7-8 and acquisitions in 1st and 2nd grade, in Turkey,

age groups 7-8 and acquisitions in 3rd and 4th grade, in England.

2. Method

When considered within the boundaries of its aim and its special framework, this is a scientific research on comparative musical education and it has got descriptive quality. In this study, the acquisitions of primary education music lesson curriculums of Turkey and of England have been comparatively grouped within the contents of learning fields of performance skills, composition skills, evaluation skills, and listening, use of knowledge and perception skills by the researchers from each field.

3. Findings

The primary education music lesson curriculum of Turkey and the primary education music lesson curriculum of England have been compared in terms of acquisition targets.

Table 1: Comparison of the Acquisitions of Performance Skills

Turkey	England
Do voice and breathing exercises	Sing with confidence, using a wider vocal range
Learn a song and sing it together	Sing with awareness of pulse and control of rhythm
Perform the musical activities	Sing in tune
Consciously use the body as an rhythm instrument to express experiences, thoughts and feelings musically	Sing using notation as a support
Sing the songs in an appropriate tempo and dynamic according to the content	Sing expressively with awareness and control of the expression elements, <i>eg timbre, tempo, dynamics</i>
Sing songs about Atatürk in the level of his grade	Perform a repeated pattern to a steady pulse
Sing songs about Atatürk in an appropriate mood with the content	Perform with awareness of different parts
	Learn a song and sing it together
	Repeat rhythmic patterns
	Plays the repeated rhythmic patterns (ostinato)
	Perform in different ways, exploring the way the performers are a musical resource
	Perform together keeping to a steady pulse
	Sing and play a range of singing games with confidence

Accompany to singing games with confidence by clapping/tapping the pulse in time, getting faster and slower
 Demonstrate the difference between pulse and rhythm
 Perform their singing games for other people

In Table 1, the acquisitions of performance skills in Turkey are based on performing in a tempo and dynamism in accordance with the mood of the songs; In England, however, the acquisitions of these skills are based on singing by using a specific vocal range, singing in tune and using notation as a support; having control of the tempo and rhythm and other expression elements; performing the repeated patterns in a steady pulse with awareness of the other parts; using the pentatonic melodies; planning and carrying out their own songs or singing games and performing or singing, alone or together, in front of the audiences in confidence.

Table 2: Comparison of the Acquisitions of Composition Skills

Turkey	England
They accompany music they learned with simple rhythmic instruments they have created	Sing songs and create different effects
Make sound images of the events they listened in a story by using different sound sources	Create sequences of sound in response to the movements and sequences of movements in response to sounds
Play the sounds they heard in the nature in accordance with the dynamics qualities by using different sound sources	Create descriptive music in pairs or small groups
Create sound games	Combine narration, sounds and movement to describe a chosen animal
Transform the simple rhythmic tunes into a musical movement	Compose music in pairs and make improvements to their own work
Make body gestures and dances in accordance with the school songs they listen to or sing	Improvise simple tunes based on the pentatonic scale
Accompany to the music of the singing game with actions and body gestures appropriate to the content	Create a class song
	Create an accompaniment to the song
	Choose instruments on the basis of internalised sounds
	Create textures by combining sounds in different ways
	Create music that describes two contrasting moods/emotions
	Compose music to describe a picture in groups of two or three
	Create a simple rhythmic ostinati and perform with others
	Make up their own singing games with tunes and actions
	Make musical decisions and create a class performance

In Table 2, we see that in Turkey, the acquisitions of compositional skills are intended to enable the students to create simple rhythmic instruments and accompany to the music; make sound images of the events of a story by using different sound sources in accordance with the dynamic qualities. On the other hand, we see that in England, the acquisitions are based on creating different effects while singing; creating sequences of sound in response to the movements and sequences of movements in response to sounds; creating a descriptive music, for example, combining the movement and the sound of an animal to describe it (in order to teach the intervals); Composing music in pairs in order to improve their own work; Improvising simple tunes based on the pentatonic scale; Creating a class song and an accompaniment to that song; Creating music that describes different moods or emotions and creating textures by combining sounds in different ways; creating a simple rhythmic ostinati and perform with others; making up their own singing games with tunes and actions and creating a class performance.

Table 3: Comparison of the Acquisitions of Evaluation Skills

Turkey	England
Recognize the sounds from different sources	Improve their own work through analysis and evaluation
Recognize the noisy and melodic sounds	Demonstrate the ability to recognize the use of structure and expressive elements through dance
Distinguish the living things from each other thru their movements and speed	Fit different rhythmic patterns together
Pick out the long or short syllables in a speech	Explore and perform different types of accompaniment
Recognize the low and high sounds	Explore and select different melodic patterns in response to words
Recognize the songs about Atatürk	Analyze and comment on how sounds are used to create different moods
	Select instruments and create sounds to describe visual images
	Analyze and comment on the effectiveness of the sounds and instruments selected
	Recognize and explore different combinations of pitch sounds
	Recognize and explore different combinations of rhythmic and non-rhythmic sounds
	Relate how the sounds are used to the different types of singing game
	Explore and choose different movements to describe animals

In table 3, there exist the acquisitions of evaluation skills in Turkey focused on the recognizing the source of sounds around, movements and speed of the living things around and distinguishing between noisy or melodic sounds, long or short syllables

and low or high sounds and songs about the love of country. In England, it is seen that analyzing and evaluating their own work, recognizing the expression elements, fitting different rhythmic patterns to each other, exploring different types of accompaniment, creating sounds and selecting instruments to describe visual images and how sounds are used to create different moods, and thus, analyzing and commenting on the effectiveness of the sounds and instruments selected, exploring the effectiveness of the combinations of sounds more than one, exploring and choosing different movements to describe animals are the aims of the the acquisition targets of evaluation skills.

Table 4: Comparison of the Acquisitions of Listening, the Use of Knowledge and Perception Skills

Turkey	England
Develop musical taste and musical knowledge by listening to different kind of music	Understand how mouth shapes can affect voice sounds
Recognize the instruments they hear	Identify and recall rhythmic and melodic patterns
Repeat and imitate the sounds they hear	Identify melodic phrases and play them by ear
Sing or perform in appropriate tempos in accordance to the music	Internalise sounds by singing parts of a song 'in their heads'
Be aware of the rules of listening or creating music in accordance with the conditions	Recognize simple structures
Apply the rules of listening or creating music in accordance with the conditions	Recognize how musical elements are used and combined to describe different animals
Participate in the activities of certain national days and weeks	Recognize repeated rhythmic patterns
Voluntar to participate in the activities about Atatürk at school	Identify repeated patterns used in a variety of music
Participate in the activities about Atatürk in the classroom	Identify phrases that could be used as an introduction, interlude and ending
Participate in the musical activities about Atatürk at school	Recognize how music can reflect different intentions
Participate in all of the musical activities	Identify how different verses could be performed expressively
Love Atatürk more than ever through music	Identify pentatonic scales in songs
Respect the National Anthem	Identify descriptive features in art and music
Listen to the National Anthem in accordance with its meaning	Identify different singing games
Enjoy participating in musical activities about Atatürk in the classroom	Identify different ways sounds are used to accompany a song
Enjoy singing songs about Atatürk in the level of their grade	Identify different actions and uses of singing games

In Table 4, the acquisitions of Listening, the Use of Knowledge and Perception Skills in Turkey aims at improving the musical taste and culture through listening to different kind of music, recognizing the instruments and imitating the sounds they hear, acting in accordance with the tempo, being aware of the rules of listening and applying the rules, participating in the classroom activities or non course events. In England, however, understanding how mouth shapes can affect voice sounds, identifying and recalling rhythmic and melodic patterns and playing them by ear, and thus, internalising sounds by singing parts of a song 'in their heads'; Recognizing simple structures, how musical elements are used and combined to describe different animals and recognizing repeated rhythmic patterns and identifying repeated patterns used in a variety of music; identifying phrases, repeated patterns (ostinato) pentatonic scales in songs and different ways or sounds to be used to accompany to a song, different singing games that could be used as an introduction, interlude and ending parts in a song are stated. All of these acquisitions are intended for understanding of the descriptive qualities of art and music.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

In terms of performance skills, it is seen that in both of the curriculums, there exist the acquisitions intended for singing and performing together in appropriate tempo and dynamic in accordance with the music; in addition to these, in England, there are also acquisitions like singing by using a wider vocal range and by using notation as a support with awareness and control of the rhythmic structures ,using repeated rhythmic patterns (ostinato), faster or slower beats, using pentatonic melodies. With all of these acquisitions, creating songs or singing games and then performing or singing these with confidence in front of the audiences are intended. Turkey, the acquisitions of performance skills are focused mostly on singing; in general, the education of instrument provides the increase of concentration, ensures confidence and encourages team work (QCA, 2000). So, it is obvious that the content of the performance skills acqititons part in the Turkish curriculum must be extended and enriched.

In terms of composition skills, it is understood that in Turkish curriculum, accompaniment to the music with movements and rhythmic instruments take place most; but, creating and developing new musical ideas, improvising skills are not given enough importance. On the contrary, in England, creating a descriptive music, creating sequences of sound in response to the movements and sequences of movements in response to sounds, combining the movement and the sound to describe animals (teaching of intervals), composing songs in groups of two or three in order to improve their own work, improvising simple melodies on the basis of pentatonic patterns, accompanyingt to a class song or another, creating music describing different moods, creating simple rhythmic ostinato and singing games are given much more importance and take place in the curriculum.

Making innovations and adding new ideas on a work of art, instead of accepting it as it is, help us improve ourselves. This way, we can set forth a comprehensive network of thoughts and ideas (Üstündağ, 2002). The students of primary education grade, must be able tocarry out individual activities, extent their musical perceptions for their musical developments. At the same time, they must be allowed to control the music by means of taking ideas and improving these (Glover & Ward, 2004). In

Turkey, creating simple rhythm instruments and accompanying to the songs with them are remarkable in terms of creativity; however, it is not enough for having composition skills. As a result, it is seen that in the Turkish curriculum the content of the composition skills must be enlarged and enriched by giving more importance to the musical technics such as composition, improvisation etc. With this, the students can have the musical control.

In terms of evaluation skills, in both of the countries there are similarities in recognizing expressive elements and distinguishing the speed of the movements of animals or living things. In Turkey, while, the acquisitions in this field focuses on “distinguishing” (between noisy or melodic sounds, tempos, lower or higher sounds, long or short syllables), in England, the focus is on analyzing the musical ideas, evaluating, exploring, choosing, association and interpretation.

Evaluation is simply the process of coming to a conclusion (Sönmez, 2004, p. 77). Besides being a cognitive process, evaluation is related to all fields of education. The students can appraise their knowledge, skills, feelings and perceptions at every level of education (Sönmez, 2004, p. 37). According to the findings in this aspect, enough importance is not given to the evaluation skills in Turkey and do not take place in the curriculum. Thus, these skills can be structured in a place where they can be used effectively.

When considered in terms of the acquisitions of listening, the use of knowledge and perception skills, in Turkey, the emphasize is on repetition thru imitation by increasing musical taste level and enlarging musical culture by listening to different kinds of music. In England, the acquisitions are on the basis of listening, internalizing the sounds, by improving the auditory memory repeating the sounds better; and the understanding of how the musical ideas are organized and used in simple structures; and how the music is used for specific purposes.

In the light of the findings obtained through the research, it is suggested that, in Turkey, primary education music lesson curriculum should be restructured by considering and given much more importance to composing and evaluating skills. Training level, its scope, content and quality should be reconsidered and re-evaluated.

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